

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1315093



The Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

**HINTS AND OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**The Reality of Psychic
Phenomena**

A record of the series of scientific tests carried out by the author in 1915 and 1916 to determine the amount, direction and nature of the force used in levitation, and other Psychic Phenomena.

*Liberally illustrated with
diagrams*

\$2.00 net

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
NEW YORK

261
88

HINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

FOR THOSE INVESTIGATING THE

PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM

BY

W. J. CRAWFORD, D.Sc.

LECTURER IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, THE MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL
INSTITUTE, BELFAST; LECTURER IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING,
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST. AUTHOR OF
"THE REALITY OF PSYCHIC
PHENOMENA," ETC.



NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

COPYRIGHT, 1918,
By E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

All Rights Reserved

Printed in the United States of America

HINTS AND OBSERVATIONS FOR THOSE INVESTIGATING THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM

I

THE belief of many thousands of persons, of whom I am one, is that man survives death. When he "dies" it is only his material body that dies. The essential part of him—the spirit—lives on and functions in a new realm. He does not alter his human characteristics because he passes through the change of death, but he is human in the new world as he is in this.

The survival of man is not scientifically proved. It cannot be demonstrated with instrumental accuracy. It cannot, at present, be shown to be true, as a theorem, say in mechanics, can be verified in a laboratory. Until the day comes when instrumental communication with the next state is an accomplished fact, it is

improbable that there will be anything like general acceptance of the reality of survival. At present it is a matter of individual judgment and of experience. The time is coming, I think, when even communication of this kind will come about as a result of the research which will undoubtedly be applied to the whole subject generally in the years immediately ahead of us, but that time is not yet. So it is at present impossible to demonstrate the other world's reality to everybody. Each must find matter for his own conviction. Each must experiment for himself and come to his own conclusions. And such investigation is not easy. Reliable mediums are scarce; the phenomena even when genuine are subtle and mostly outside the scheme of things as we know them in this world; there are fraud and humbug around; there are the questions of the subconscious mind and various strata of consciousness, secondary and tertiary personality, unconscious action of the medium, telepathy, and so on. So on the whole it is only to the relatively few that the knowledge and conviction can come that survival is a fact. People generally are afraid that what

may look like a demonstration of survival is not really so, but is a false deduction from immature or unknown data. Euclidian proof, to state it plainly, is impossible for the majority of people at the present time. But, nevertheless, many people whose minds are not blocked by prejudice and not obsessed by the idea that the avenues of sense are the only avenues of knowledge, many obtain very strong evidence of the reality of the next state if they will but take the trouble to look for it. Not proof, mind you, in the sense that the scientist understands proof, but yet a very strong probability which may amount to personal conviction. There is as yet no telephone by means of which we can ring up our friend who has gone before; we have to communicate with him in roundabout and devious ways, ways which are sometimes troublesome and annoying when we take a shortsighted view of things, but which are very wonderful when we take the larger view.

For me the reality of the next state admits of no doubt. I am as sure that it exists as I am that I am writing these words at this moment. My personal conviction is the result of a great

4 HINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

amount of experimental and other investigation into the phenomena of mediumship, the nature of some of which the reader may understand from a perusal of my work "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena." When I set out on the investigation I daresay I was as skeptical as anybody of the actuality of these things; but years of experimental study have entirely altered my convictions. I am, as I say, perfectly certain that all humanity, of whatever race or creed, survives death and passes at once into another state of existence or plane of being. This passing is an automatic process and is part of the scheme of nature. The will, or belief, or faith of man has nothing to do with it.

People who know little of the subject except from hearsay and who are bewildered and prejudiced by the undoubted large amount of fraud, deceit, and want of respectability formerly connected with it, often ask me if there is really anything in the phenomena of spiritualism. They want to know if mal-observation, hallucination, conscious or unconscious fraud on the part of the medium, or a hundred and one other things, cannot account for all these strange hap-

penings without the necessity of resorting to a supernatural origin. Even if the actual occurrence of the phenomena be granted, are not our own personalities tremendously complex and fully capable of compassing what look like miracles by means yet unknown or undiscovered? So why assume that "spirits" are the operating agencies even if we have to give in to external operators of some kind?

These are the kind of questions my friends ask me as one having some modern knowledge of the subject. But chiefly they wish to know if the phenomena known as spiritualistic really take place; if they occur beyond all possibility of dispute; if I am absolutely sure of it.

My answer to them is that certain types of what are known as physical and mental phenomena *do* occur. As certainly do they occur as that night follows day.

Whatever be the interpretation, there is nowadays no doubt of the *actuality* of the phenomena. Their occurrence has been established as surely as any type of ordinary physical phenomena. I advise my friends to pay no heed whatever to the various uninformed articles

6 HINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

that appear from time to time in the public press or to the prejudiced diatribes of people who have never properly investigated for themselves; for it is one of the most remarkable facts about this subject that people can be found willing and even eager to pronounce opinions upon it who have never sat in a single séance.

Before I deal with the more practical parts of psychic investigation the reader will perhaps be interested briefly to learn some few of the things that the entities who direct the phenomena (I often call them "operators" in this work) declare to be true of themselves and of the world in which they dwell, together with some of my observations upon their statements. The reader is to understand that I do not press my own beliefs upon him. I am only telling him a few things that appear to me likely to be true and which will probably be placed definitely within the region of ascertained fact before this century has run its course.

When we take a broad view of what the operators say of their world and have regard to the many little incidents that occur at the séances—incidents which cannot be properly re-

ported to outsiders because of their intimate nature and their spasmodic and peculiar type—we see plainly that there are two main lines of consideration. Briefly, it may be stated that the inhabitants of the other world can report to us anything in the way of their personal emotional states but that they cannot tell us anything very satisfactory about the composition of their world. They can tell us if they are happy or sad, gay or gloomy, energetic or indolent; they can say if they are pleased with their surroundings or otherwise, if they would like to return to the earth, and so on, but they cannot tell us in a convincing way if their world contains what we know here as mountains and seas. Of course this is a crude way of putting it, but we cannot expect to have exact lines of demarcation when we are dealing with a subject such as the present. The inhabitants of the psychic world—at least those in direct contact with us in the séance room—appear to be beings similar to ourselves in regard to all essential qualities. They possess all the characteristics of human beings. They are sad, joyful, happy, mirthful, humorous, as the mood

seizes them. In fact, if we say they are human beings living in another world and separated from us by a veil of sense, but that they can communicate their thoughts and feelings to us through this veil, we shall have an exact representation of what seem to be the facts of the case.

I admit that it is very difficult for the ordinary person to bring home to his consciousness the fact that these unseen beings can possibly be like himself in their make-up. There is an ingrained feeling in humanity that the beings inhabiting the after-death world must be far removed from us in mental qualities and characteristics—we feel that they should show a great advance in intellectual equipment over what they possessed here; that they should be, if not quite angels, at any rate not far removed from them. Of course this instinctive feeling we all possess is due to the centuries of religious instruction behind us; we feel that the next state must of necessity be either heaven or hell. Hence it is rather a shock to us when we find the inhabitants of that other state not to be angels by any manner of means, not to exceed

us appreciably in intelligence, but to be, in fact, only good-natured beings of much the same capacity as our familiar selves. I confess in my own case that I have not yet quite got over the "heaven" feeling, so deep down do age-long suggestions go. I cannot yet quite realise when I talk to any of the inhabitants of the other world that I am, as a matter of fact, talking to beings of nearly the same capacity as any human companions. I *know* that death makes no change in essentials, yet deep-grained ancestral suggestions always cause in me a sense akin to wonder that it is so.

The entities behind my experimental circles have shown themselves by their acts to be essentially human beings; and in this respect they conform to the general rules all over the world. At all séances of repute, wherever and whenever held, by whatever form of mediumship the communications are received, the communicating entities declare themselves in every sense to be human beings. They say they have simply passed the portals of death and this is practically the only way they differ from ordinary humanity here.

The operators say that their world is a bright and happy one, full of vital energy. Its inhabitants are much more "alive" than when they lived on earth. This is a point they emphasise particularly. They say they have no desire whatever to return here—they are far better off where they are. The broad general fact seems to be that the other state is a more forcible or energetic one than this—energy seems to be the keynote. Everybody and everything are alive in a degree much beyond our conception of being alive. Their state of existence is altogether fuller, freer, and of higher capacity than ours. Moreover the operators declare most emphatically that they are very *happy*. Whenever asked the question they try, by the energetic way in which they manifest, to illustrate to us how happy and content they are. They are very sure of it and will take no denial.

The operators declare that each of them possesses a body, and if asked if it is what we understand by the *psychic* body, they answer in the affirmative. They declare that they are present in the séance room in the psychic body; that when clairvoyants see them, they see, in

effect, their psychic bodies. They say this body of theirs is not subject to decay or disorganisation corresponding to anything resembling physical decay or disorganisation. They emphatically state that all humanity possesses two bodies, the physical and the psychical; that death really means the complete and final separation of the two. As a matter of fact, a good many clairvoyants have declared that they have been able to observe—with the clairvoyant eye—their actual separation at the time of death, and the accounts are generally consistent.

The psychic body if it really exists, and I think it does, has the following qualities amongst others:

(1) It is perfectly invisible to normal sight, though it may occasionally be made visible to clairvoyant sight.

None of the entities in my experimental séance rooms has ever been visible to me; but various clairvoyants have described spirit forms as being present and the descriptions have been apparently confirmed by vigorous and happy-sounding raps.

12 HINTS AND OBSERVATIONS

(2) It is quite impalpable to normal senses generally.

I have never seen, heard, felt or "sensed" the psychic body or any entity in the séance room.

(3) It is used as part of the mechanism for producing physical phenomena.

I have strong experimental evidence that this is so. The operators say that both the unfreed psychic body of the medium and their own freed psychic bodies are used in conjunction.

(4) Physical matter presents no barrier to its passage through space.

(5) It is of such a nature that when united to the physical body in a living person it is an exact duplicate of the physical body. It would appear that each cell or even atom of the physical body has somehow imbedded in it, or superimposed on it, or connected with it, a corresponding element of the psychic body.

(6) Its composition is not material in the sense that we know matter.

(7) It would seem to radiate all round it an aura. These are signs of two distant auras

round the body of a man * and it is possible that one is due to the physical and the other to the psychical body.

(8) It would appear to be the form or mould upon which the physical body is organised; it being therefore the permanent part of us while the physical is the evanescent.

As I have said I have much experimental evidence which shows that there is really within the body of the medium an interior something upon which the operators work when they are producing phenomena. It is a something which while being impalpable so far as our ordinary senses are concerned, is capable of being projected from her into space and thereafter being filled out with gross matter taken from her physical body. This filling out with gross matter stiffens this invisible, impalpable, projected something and enables it to act on inanimate objects in the séance room, such as chairs and tables. If it be a portion of the medium's psychic body, as the operators say it is, then the psychic body cannot be rigid as regards form, but must be more or less plastic; so that a por-

* See "The Human Atmosphere," by Dr. Kilner.

tion of it can be elongated and projected to definite points in space. We have to remember that we can conceive an etheric duplicate of the physical body. We know relatively very little about the ether, which may, for all we can tell, be a complex substance. The only thing that seems certain about it is that it is something which passes beyond the bounds of matter. Possibly matter is differentiated ether. There are possibly many differentiated forms of ether besides that one which we know as matter. There may indeed, for ought we know, be a whole world of substance and even life within the folds of the ether. Nowadays we have reached down to the electron and there find apparently the beginning of matter. It does not necessarily follow that we have found the beginning of all things.

There is a great deal of evidence that the psychic body does really exist and this evidence is fairly exact and is quite voluminous. The most satisfactory part of it is that dealing with the projection of the *double*, as the psychic body has been termed, from living persons. Many records are extant which show that while

the physical body of a person was sleeping, or in trance, or sometimes even awake, his psychic body was seen a considerable distance away. The matter is under investigation at present, but taking the evidence in a general way it seems to my mind that we do really possess something of the nature of a body—a body not made of matter in the ordinary sense—which, during life here, is firmly attached to or forms an integral part of the physical body and which is probably the vitalising agent of that body. If this psychic body is partly withdrawn from the physical or from any portion of it, then the latter is left in a lifeless insensitive condition. I have shown elsewhere that the medium at one of my experimental circles nowadays experiences practically no physical inconvenience even when forces approximating half a hundred-weight have their focus upon her body. She seems indifferent to such forces. How is this? A valued scientific correspondent has suggested that the condition of apparent anæsthesia is due to the psychic body of the medium being exteriorised during the occurrence of phenomena; that is to say, all her psychic body except

the part relating to the head is separated from her physical body and is exteriorised, or moved outwards in space. My correspondent thinks that the brain and head are not affected because the medium is quite conscious during the séance. Her psychic and physical bodies being separated, the vitalising agent is not closely in contact with the physical and hence she is in a condition of partial anæsthesia. My friend has possibly hit upon a portion of the truth.

The operators say that our entry into their world at death seems excessively wonderful to us, but yet that there is a degree of familiarity about it which keeps us from becoming bewildered. In other words we are under the action of the law of continuity, which enables us to maintain balance on arrival within our novel surroundings. Nevertheless I have reason to believe that most of us will be rather astonished, and I believe, delighted. Those who have been suffering from bodily illness will find that instantaneously they have become rejuvenated. I have been told that the sense of bodily comfort, as it were, which comes to a man on his entry into the other life, especially if previous

to death he has suffered from a long, lingering illness, is delightful.

The operators emphatically declare that the fact of death does not in the least degree alter a man's character. He is exactly the same five minutes after the passing as five minutes before it. So that the next state of existence contains all kinds and conditions of humanity, just as the earth does. They say that malevolence, envy, hate and all the lower attributes inherent in earth humanity exist also in their world. There are not the two classes only—good and bad—as theology would have us believe. They say that the good bears a higher ratio to the bad than is the case here; so that we have an advance, if it is only a small one, so far as moral qualities are concerned.

The operators say that their psychic bodies are incapable of being ill or feeling pain, but—and it is an important *but*—they emphatically declare that mental pain can be felt and endured in their world. In other words they have no physical ailments, but remorse, anxiety, and mental distress of various kinds still find a place with them. The other state of existence

would appear to be no heaven and no hell, and the sooner this is recognised the better. Judging by what the operators tell us, it is a world just a little higher than our own as regards the moral status of its inhabitants.

According to the operators the people on their side are somewhat curious about psychic phenomena. I have often asked them if there were many looking on at our séances. Whenever asked the question they would begin rapping and keep on rapping until we were tired of hearing them. They wished to indicate by this that there were great crowds of spirit people looking on. They told me this was the case at all our séances. They gave me the impression that the séance room and the sitters were surrounded by a huge invisible audience arranged in an orderly and disciplinary manner, perhaps tier upon tier as in a lecture theatre. The séance to many of them would appear to be as novel as it is to us. Moreover, it probably gives them the opportunity of looking again for a short time upon the affairs of earth. In all probability such watchers are able to see the sitters forming the circle. A tunnel has

been temporarily driven between the two stages of existence—stages normally isolated—with the consequence that crowds of those on the other side seize the opportunity and look through on the world they have left behind.

I have asked the operators why they continue to demonstrate at séances month after month, year after year; does it not get tiring to them? Would they not be better employed doing something else? Their answer to this is that the mere fact of being engaged in producing the phenomena and thus doing useful work helps them in their own development. For this and for other reasons I have rather come to the conclusion that one of the central ideas underlying the activities of the next state is that of service.

The operators say that there are different spheres within their world. They say that they themselves belong to different spheres, some of them being in the second, some in the third and some in the fourth. One evening, when we had a well-known trance medium with us, an entity purported to control who said he was from the seventh sphere. He said he was the spirit di-

rector-in-chief of the circle and gave a few homely words of advice and encouragement to the medium and sitters. As to what these spheres may be I can say very little. Perhaps different spirit localities, perhaps different states of mentality or consciousness, perhaps something quite otherwise. However, the operators will have it that these spheres exist.

The entities communicating say, as I have already mentioned, that life is very full, vigorous and keen in their world. They say that there is occupation for everybody and amusement for everybody. They declare that many phases of activity in our world have counterparts in theirs; and that in addition they have occupations to which there are no counterparts on earth. It appears that no one need be idle, but that all can readily find *congenial* duties. Most duties here are uncongenial so that if the entities tell the truth, the next state is in this respect in advance of ours. Music and the arts also seem to have higher expression there than here.

I have been told at direct voice séances that the next stage of existence possesses what are

called "dark" spheres—places or states which, according to the entities, are most unpleasant and in all respects undesirable. The entities say there is no orthodox hell, but that the dark spheres are nevertheless places of retribution whence egress can only be attained by laborious and painstaking effort. Possibly it is only the worst of humanity who pass into these dark spheres at physical death. Most of us, who are ordinary folk, and neither demons nor angels, will find ourselves well enough satisfied with the change. But the point I wish to emphasise is that the entities say that in their state of existence there are in reality "dark" places—places which should be avoided at all cost, the way to avoid them, so we are told, being to live a normal life while on earth.

Although the other state of existence seems to be inhabited, so far as we can judge, by human beings who have passed from this earth by the process of death and who are very similar to ourselves as regards their states of consciousness and general characteristics, we find that we can form very little conception as to the physical appearance—if I may so term it—

of that next world. Is it a real tangible world containing things, for instance, that correspond to our mountains, lakes and seas? Is there anything in that world outside the personalities or states of consciousness of the beings inhabiting it? Is there anything corresponding to matter, as we know it here? In a word, is it a solid, real world such as we are used to here, or is it some kind of phantasmagoria without reality or substantiality as a basis?

I may say at once that the operators at the Belfast circle are unable to explain—even by analogy—the appearance of their world. And I think this state of affairs holds generally at all reputable circles. Not that the entities inhabiting it exist within the unsubstantial fabric of a vision, as it were, but simply that they are unable to explain to us in terms we can understand.

There is some reason to suppose that the psychic realm may include a dimension more than ours, i. e., it may be in four dimensions, length, breadth, thickness and a something else which we may call X. If this is so we need not be surprised that its inhabitants can tell us

practically nothing of it. We ourselves could give no information to beings living in a two-dimensional world which would be understandable by them. I once interrogated the operators at the Belfast circle on this matter. The following is the conversation, answers being obtained by raps:—

Q. Do you know what a state of three dimensions is?

A. Yes.

Q. We live in this world in a state of three dimensions, length, breadth and thickness. You understand what I mean?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, is the world in which you live one of four dimensions?

A. No.

Q. Is it one of three dimensions?

A. No.

Q. It is one of three or of four dimensions?

A. No.

They seemed pretty positive about it and as far as I could gather appeared to know what I meant. I went on with my questioning, but beyond the assertions stated above, they did not

seem able to explain. The impression I gathered was that they exist in a state which is not dimensional in the sense that ours is dimensional; it cannot be described as what we mean by possessing four dimensions, nor yet what we mean by possessing three. Indeed, when by a further series of questions I proceeded to try to get at what it really was, I came to the conclusion they were unable to tell me or to offer any analogy which might be helpful. So I went on to speak of other things, thinking that by such roundabout means I might manage to obtain a glimpse at what was meant.

Q. In the world in which you exist are there mountains and lakes and rivers?

A. Yes.

Q. You remember what the mountains and lakes and rivers of this earth are like?

A. Yes.

Q. Are yours as real to you as ours to us?

A. Yes.

Q. On this earth a mountain appears much the same to everybody. Is that the case in your world?

A. No.

Q. It appears different according to who views it?

A. Yes.

Such replies as these indicate, if we are to believe the operators (and in regard to experimental work which I could verify I have always found them truthful) that there is something radically strange about the world in which they exist, something that they cannot explain, something that is no doubt simple and easy enough to them, but which they are quite unable to convey to us in terms we can follow.

This inability of the operators to explain the composition of their world holds also with regard to the explanation of phenomena they themselves produce. As a general thing it may be stated that they cannot explain the *inwardness*—if I may so express it—of their phenomenal effects. They can tell us whereabouts on a material body they apply mechanical pressure, what leg of the table they grip, and so on, but they cannot inform us what kind of energy it is they use to obtain their results. This may be illustrated by a conversation I had with them on the matter. I had been discussing the levi-

tation of a table with them. Now, I have little doubt that at the commencement of the phenomenon of levitation, a loose fibrous or thread-like structure is projected from the medium and attached to the under surface of the table, and that psychic force is then gradually exerted along this structure, making it sufficiently rigid to raise the table. Experimental observation shows me these things (the reader will find the matter fairly fully discussed in my book, "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena".) Now, it had occurred to me that the thread-like structure really consists of a cable of thin tubes and that something is pushed into the tubes in the form of a fluid.

Here is the conversation:—

Q. Let us consider the phenomenon of levitation. Do you first of all eject a thread-like loose structure from the medium's body to the under surface of the table and attach the end of it to the under surface?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you then exert a force along the loose structure which stiffens it and enables it to levitate the table?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you apply this force gradually?

A. Yes.

(These three answers agree with what I found from experiment.)

Q. Now I want to consider the thread-like structure along which you exert the psychic force. Is each of these threads in reality a tube?

A. Yes.

Q. Each is hollow inside?

A. Yes.

Q. You know what is meant by a tube?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you stiffen the tubes by filling them with something?

A. Yes.

Q. With a gas?

A. Yes.

Q. You know what I mean by a gas?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it not a fluid like water you inject into the tubes?

A. No.

Q. Is it not a liquid?

A. No.

Q. Is it a gas?

A. Yes.

Q. Is the gas one like the air we have here?

A. No.

Q. You know what a gas of the earth is like?

A. Yes.

Q. Is the gas you inject into the tubes like Oxygen, Nitrogen, Hydrogen, or any of the others we have here?

A. No.

Q. But it is a gas?

A. Yes.

Q. You are quite sure it is a gas?

A. Yes.

Q. But we have no gas on earth like it?

A. No.

Q. Then this particular gas of which you speak does not belong to the earth?

A. No.

Q. It is only to be found in the spirit world?

A. Yes.

Q. But you would call it a gas?

A. Yes.

Q. This gas is supplied to you for the purpose of producing the phenomena?

A. Yes.

Q. Does the material of which the tubes are formed belong to the spirit world like the gas?

A. No.

Q. The material for the tubes belongs to the matter of our earth?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it matter taken from the body of the medium?

A. Yes.

Q. So that a tube consists of two kinds of matter, matter from the earth and matter from the spirit world?

A. Yes.

I went over the conversation again, putting the questions in different form, but the operators stuck to their tale. In brief it is that the structure which levitates the table, which moves the table about the floor, which makes raps, consists of a bundle of tubes. The tubes themselves are manufactured from matter taken from the body of the medium. A gas, or something which resembles a gas, and which is not

found on earth but belongs exclusively to the psychic world, is injected into the tubes and this causes a pressure which makes the whole bundle rigid or semi-rigid. My readers are to understand of course that the explanation is not mine and that the rapping entities are responsible for it. It need not be taken seriously, for all it shows is that the operators seemingly cannot explain in plain terms the more subtle phases in the production of their phenomena.

It has been stated in some places that when a man dies he enters upon a period of oblivion before waking up in the next state; that is to say, there is a break in consciousness lasting for a longer or shorter period. Accordingly, I asked some questions of the operators. I went about the matter as follows:—

Q. Will the operator who has been rapping answer me a question?

A. Yes.

Q. I want you to tell me for what period of time you personally experienced unconsciousness when you died. Have you any objections to telling me?

A. No.

Q. Was it for more than three days?

A. No.

Q. Less than three days?

A. Yes.

Q. Less than two days?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it for only a few hours?

A. No.

(A pause to consider what the operator could mean.)

Q. Were you unconscious at all?

A. (With joy) No.

Q. You passed through the change we call death without a break in consciousness?

A. Yes.

Q. Is this general?

A. No.

Q. Yours was a special case?

A. Yes.

Q. There is usually a period of unconsciousness?

A. Yes.

Q. From a few hours to a few days?

A. Yes.

At direct voice séances I have been informed

by entities supposedly speaking through the trumpet that in some few cases unconsciousness at death persists for as long as six months of our time.

One's feelings on waking up in the next state.

I asked questions on this matter from the rapping entity above mentioned.

Q. Did you feel strange when you realised you had passed through the change of death?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you feel very strange and bewildered?

A. No.

Q. Things were strange yet in a kind of way familiar?

A. Yes.

Q. Would it be correct to say that the degree of strangeness and unfamiliarity is on a par with what one of us would experience on being suddenly transferred to, say, some tropical country?

A. Yes.

There may be a line of continuity between the two worlds—and there seems no doubt of it—but for all that the two worlds themselves are

radically different. It is questionable if matter—in the sense that we understand matter—exists within the next state at all; even matter in its most refined form, such as the electronic. Far more likely is it that our matter vanishes there altogether, even to our last conception of it, and the next state is an etheric one, a fact which would not render continuity impossible, for physicists are well acquainted with the interaction of ether on matter. It seems to me that our matter has some kind of a counterpart or mould within the next state, very difficult to explain in words. Perhaps matter here is the projection of fourth dimensional matter, which would explain a lot of anomalies.

That there are very real energies in the next state which have some form of correspondence to the energies we have here, I have no manner of doubt. I have seen enough in the séance room to convince me of this. To take only one example:—In the phenomenon of levitation of a table or other article a psychic arm extrudes from the medium—I do not mean an arm in the sense of the human arm, but a projection of some kind from her body. Now this projection

or extrusion is practically invisible and impalpable—it is impalpable except just at its free end, where it grips or presses on the body it is levitating—yet it transmits throughout its length great stresses, as is obviously the case when it sustains at its free end, as it has done, a body weighing between thirty and forty pounds. Again, this structure seems to contain within it quite a lot of matter temporarily borrowed from the body of the medium. In what state or condition is this matter that it should be invisible and impalpable and yet be capable of transmitting large stresses? Certainly in no state which we know here. A scientific friend has suggested that it has temporarily disappeared into a fourth-dimensional state, which is at any rate conceivable. And how can matter be taken from the medium's body, and how can it be returned, without injury to her? These are statements of fact, though they are problems whose solutions are unobtainable in our present state of knowledge. That such things happen shows us, I think, that the inhabitants of the other world, or at any rate those of them who are trained to the work, are

able to act on living matter in ways of which we have not the least conception. It seems that they can make rear attacks on matter, whereas we have to be content with frontal fighting. In any case their ability to act on matter indicates that even in their plane of existence they are in indirect contact with it. Possibly their relation to matter is similar to our relation to the ether, that is to say, there is a reversal of standpoint.

From my experience in the séance room I conceive the next state as being a very material one, or perhaps I should rather say, a very solid one to the senses with which we shall be equipped when we are its inhabitants. I do not for a moment think it is an ethereal, evanescent, quasi-real world, having no external solidity. On the contrary, I am satisfied that it presents to those living in it an appearance of reality at any rate as great as this world does to us, and probably greater. It seems to me to be all a matter of sense perception. We can be quite sure that the entities existing on the other side of the veil do not possess the material senses that we do. But the peculiar thing

is that they possess senses in a general way analogous to ours. Probably even in our state of existence such senses are latent within us and suddenly spring into maturity just at or shortly after death of the physical body. But however it is, with whatever instruments of perception the unseen entities are equipped, their world, according to their own accounts and according to what I can indirectly perceive through years of experimental study in the séance room, appears to them as a solid, real world possessing permanent form. Incidentally they say it is a beautiful world, more beautiful even than ours.

I am satisfied from experimental observation that the inhabitants of the next state have a different conception of time from ours. Even when they approach our world very closely, as they do at good séances, they seem to have some difficulty in getting into our way of computing time, that is, in thinking back to what they knew as time when inhabitants of the earth. As to what the difference is I do not know. It is possible that both time and space as we know them here are only components of something else,

and that the inhabitants of the other world see the resultant, as it were.

A speaking entity at a direct voice séance once gratuitously informed me that there is no such thing as space. Without going so far as that we are bound to come to the conclusion that our views of space are limited. Space is infinite with regard to our present senses. It seems to me like an illusion purposely presented to us in order to conform to the principles of our earth existence; to keep us chained in, as it were.

The entities communicating say, as I have already mentioned, that the next state is not a homogeneous whole, but that it is built up of "spheres" and "realms," and that they themselves do not all belong to one sphere. Entities belonging to a higher sphere may come down at will to a lower, but not *vice versa*. At one of our séances some of the visitors asked the operators in what spheres they (the visitors) would find themselves when they left the earth, and the answer was, the third and fourth. The first sphere would seem to be the abode of people whose moral development was somewhat

low when they passed from things terrestrial; who need a lot of cleaning up before they can rise into the second and higher spheres; in other words, the spheres next the earth are the abode of the riff-raff of humanity. The entities tell me that all our experimental circles are guarded very strictly on their side so that no undesirables shall be able to get near. As a matter of fact I would not care to be in the Belfast séance room if I had any doubt of the beneficent intentions of those behind the scenes. With psychic forces up to nearly a hundred-weight being exerted one can easily imagine what would be likely to happen if an evilly-disposed entity was able to thrust his presence and will upon the regular operating entities. The poltergeist disturbances, whose occurrence has so often been reported, show that such evilly-disposed entities actually exist and I can easily believe the operators when they state they have thoroughly to guard the séance chamber.

The operators state that it is some attribute of the psychic body which automatically prevents an entity in one sphere from rising to a

higher. What they say leads to the impression that the psychic body of a person in the lower spheres (say the first and second) has some ordinary matter entangled with it, i.e., his body is not purely psychic or etheric, but is encrusted, if I may use the word, with particles of some kind of matter. The matter may be of so fine a nature that it would not be palpable to us, yet its presence in the psychic realm is a great embarrassment to the entity possessing it. If we accept the theory that while here we possess the psychic and physical bodies together, inextricably commingled, and that the former is the organising structure of the latter, it is not so hard to suppose that when the two are separated at death, a thousandth of a gram or so physical matter may remain mixed up with the psychic form.

I once tried to weigh the psychic body of my medium. She was seated on a weighing machine and I asked the operators to exteriorise her psychical body and place it beyond the limits of the weighing machine. I wished to see if there would be any decrease in the weight of the medium when this was done, i. e., if her

psychic body was susceptible to the force of gravity. On the operators giving three little raps on the floor as a sign to me that they had done what I asked, I found that the medium's weight had decreased by about eight pounds, but that the decrease did not remain constant at eight pounds, but became less and less until there was practically no diminution at all; and during the whole experiment the operators declared that the medium's psychic body was exteriorised and placed beyond the limits of the weighing machine. I thought at the time that the experiment was a failure and I am not now sure that there is much in it. It has, however, occurred to me as just possible that when the operators tried to remove the medium's psychic body they were unable to remove it *per se*, but had to take some physical matter along with it, i. e., some gross matter was at first adhering to the psychic body and this was gradually returned to the medium's physical body, as evidenced by the gradual reduction of her loss of weight, until finally her psychic body became more and more nearly pure.

I expect the normal human being on awaken-

ing in the next state will find that there has occurred an exaltation in his state of consciousness; that is to say, that his sense of his own *ego* has been enlarged. There will automatically come to him a more intense perception of vitality; he will feel himself a more vibrant entity than he ever felt himself here. Here his soul looks upon Creation out of the five little windows of the senses. They are really very small windows and afford only a very limited view. Some of them seem also purposely so designed that the view they do let through is discoloured and out of focus, so that instead of seeing the Universe as it really is, man beholds only glimpses of it. Nevertheless it is only a matter of sense perception and I therefore expect to find that across the barrier each of us will come into possession of a set of new senses much more useful and effective than those we have here. Those senses are probably latent in us now. Some of them may even be slightly active here, as is probable in the case of clairvoyants. For the great majority of mankind, however, they are latent and of little apparent use; though this uselessness may be *but* appar-

ent as they may be the means of which life is possible here at all, inasmuch as they may form a link connecting us with energies within the etheric fold. In any case I fully expect that immediately on dissolution man will find himself the owner of senses exactly suited to the conditions of his new world. Nature is too orderly and precise in that part of it which we can examine here for the case to be otherwise. If there is a next world—and I for one know there is—then it follows we can predicate all the conditions of that world as existing subject to law and order. There is certain to be nothing of chaos.

This world is carried on—I mean as regards its physical well-being—according to very strict law. The force of gravity, for instance, which holds our bodies to the surface of the earth which determines the path of the earth round the sun, and which, in fact, renders life here possible at all, is constant. It is the same now as it will be a thousand years hence. If it varied in any appreciable degree there would be such an upheaval in the universe as no human brain could conceive. The laws regarding the

production of electricity, to cite another case, do not vary. The laws regarding the three states of matter, solid liquid, and gaseous, do not vary. We go on our way under constant law and order. We do not find a whimsical fickleness about Mother Nature. And so, reasoning by analogy, I expect to find our next state of existence as regards its physical aspects, or what correspond to physical aspects, as firmly and unchangeably governed as this. There will be natural law and order of a well-nigh perfect kind and all the philosophers and occultists in existence could not persuade me to the contrary.

Besides physical law this world of ours is also under rule and order with regard to the government of the people in it. So also, I expect, with the other world. It is a somewhat higher state than this (of that there is no doubt) and it is certain to be under organised government. Natural law will hold sway over it and spirit law will touch all its people.

If there is one thing more certain than another it is that the other world is not at some immense distance from us, to be reached only by tremendous effort and involving total sep-

aration from the affairs of this earth. The other world is here. It probably interpenetrates the earth and all things earthly. Being a state of a different order from ours, either by simple numerical dimension or by reason of its involving the ether directly in its composition, it can exist along with ours. That we are not conscious of its existence is no disproof of this. We have analogies which are helpful. A room, for instance, may be simultaneously full of light rays, X-rays, wireless telegraphy rays and so on; they may all exist together and our senses will tell us only of the light rays. The rest, without the use of special instruments, will be as though they do not exist for us. So it is perfectly conceivable that the next state may exist in a condition of extreme reality and we be quite unconscious of its presence. Its inhabitants may be all round us—and I believe they *are* all round us—and we may be quite unconscious of their nearness. Indeed, a tremendous range of evidence shows that we are continually surrounded by those who exist in that other world, i. e., by those who have passed through the process of death. Whether they

are continually conscious of our proximity I think is doubtful. That they are sometimes conscious of our presence I am sure is correct. Even many of us here at some time or other have, I think, sensed an invisible presence with us. But generally speaking we on this side are blind and deaf to all projections from the other state.

That this earth is of a somewhat lower order with regard to its mental characteristics and physical energies than that next one of which I speak, is, I think, evident from what occurs in the séance room. All we can do in the séance room is to present to the unseen operators suitable passive conditions, i. e., we do nothing actively involving intelligent knowledge and design. All the work is done by the unseen entities. They it is who set in motion the intricate processes which result in phenomena. We sit still and do nothing. It is not conceivable that their world is of a lower order than ours if this is so. A civilised race does not enter a country of savages and expect the savages to be able to design bridges and lay down railway tracks. The higher does not expect the lower to do the

brain work. It is certain that all the active thinking is done by the inhabitants of the next state when they communicate with us either by way of physical or mental phenomena. So it therefore appears that their world is at least a step in advance of ours. It is a stage through which we pass on our unknown journey. Its inhabitants are the "live" people while we are relatively sleeping. As a matter of fact many entities call ours the shadow world and theirs the real one.

Is the investigation of spiritualism a suitable study for everybody?

The answer is in the negative. Persons of hysterical temperament should have nothing to do with it. Only those with calm well-balanced minds should touch it. For my own part I cannot see why the mere fact of opening up a channel of communication with the next state should cause anybody to lose his ordinary self control and make him behave like a religious fanatic. Surely the idea of there being a state into which all humanity gravitates after this one is a common-sense, logical conclusion from the general

facts of our present life. There is nothing to get excited about. None of my friends gets the least bit excited and I have many who are interested in the subject. Nevertheless I have known people who are not fitted temperamentally for psychic investigation, and I warn any such to leave it severely alone. If it cannot be approached in a calm, reasoning spirit, and without undue absorption, it should be left in the hands of those better fitted for the task.

One of the matters least understood by enquirers into psychic phenomena is the question of the effect of the phenomena on their bodily health. Now, although we are dealing with a realm practically unknown when we deal with psychic things, there are a few common-sense rules which if observed, will save us from bad effects. Psychic experience would be dearly bought if we could only have it at the expense of nervous or mental breakdown. Properly investigated there is no risk of this. Improperly investigated there is very serious risk. Why should there be risk to one's health when one is a member of a circle where physical phenomena are produced, say for the sake of argument,

strong physical phenomena such as telekinesis, the trumpet voice or materialisation? The reason is obvious. The levitation of tables, the movement of furniture, the carrying about of trumpets, the voices, the materialisation of forms, all represent a quantity of work performed on the physical plane—and work not permitted in the easiest way as we ourselves would do it, but done in a special and abnormal way by what purport to be spirit entities. For a given quantity of work done, at least an equal quantity of energy must disappear. Whence comes this energy? There is only too much reason to suppose that it comes from the bodies of the medium and sitters. Do not suppose that it all comes from the medium. It is not correct to consider the medium the only source of energy. It is more correct to consider him the instrument whereby the energy of the circle can be utilised to produce phenomena. So that a sitter at a physical circle probably supplies from his body—and from the most vital part of his bodily structure, his nervous system—elements which the spirit operators utilise to do their

phenomenal work. The sitter therefore loses nervous energy and it is in this respect that the danger to his health lies. In a harmonious family circle the loss of nervous energy is at a minimum consistent with the presentation of phenomena; in a promiscuous circle hastily got together it is likely to be at a maximum. I do not think that even at the best the process of converting nervous energy into physical phenomena is an efficient one. I am rather inclined to suppose it one of the most inefficient methods of conversions of energy we have in nature. If this is so it follows that if we could accurately compute the work actually done, say at a sitting of one and a half hours' duration where there was an abundance of phenomena, we would find that the energy taken from the bodies of the sitters might be five or more times as great, even in the most harmonious circles; whilst in inharmonious sittings it might be ten or more times as great. The figures, of course, are only guess-work but they will serve to show what I mean. Hence the reader can see that quite a considerable amount of energy in the form of nervous elements must be taken from

the bodies of the sitters. Energy may also be supplied from the psychic world, but we must not rely upon that. Therefore the primary rule for the safeguarding of one's health is this—*Do not sit too often.* At the Belfast circle the young medium and her family sat only once a week except on special occasions. The consequence of this was that her health never in the least suffered, nor the health of any of the circle. Phenomena could be relied on to occur at 95 per cent. of the sittings. Bad weather, good weather, nothing seemed to make any difference. Had she been a professional medium and sitting every day, does anyone suppose the results would have been anything like so good and reliable? So the investigator should take warning by practical experience and sit not more than once a week, and not longer than an hour and a half even then. It is the safest way, and it is best to be on the safe side when dealing with a subject about which so little is known with certainty. One is apt to be a little enthusiastic at the commencement of one's investigations and to overdo the thing. For this is one of the subjects of which the difficulties and

dangers are only apparent when one has entered well into it.

Let there be no mistake about it. To most people frequent sittings, especially for physical phenomena, is injurious. The least damage is done in a harmonious family circle which meets regularly. Different people are differently susceptible. It would appear that the spirit entities can "draw" more easily from some people than from others. That is to say, people are so constituted as regards their bodily functions that with some the nervous elements necessary for phenomena can be abstracted with greater ease and in larger quantities than with others. Such people are therefore liable to be injured physically if they do not use the greatest discretion. Just why the vital nervous fluid can be taken more easily from some than from others is unknown, but I have no doubt of the general truth of the statement. I have found that among seven people in the séance room, the loss of bodily weight after a good phenomenal sitting varied from nothing in the case of one sitter to six ounces in the case of another (see "The Reality of Psychic Phenom-

ena’’). Some of this may have been due to natural causes, such as respiration and so on, but very improbably the whole of it. And while it is true that with some people the nervous elements can be abstracted with ease, in the case of a few people they cannot be abstracted at all; and some people are even so constituted that they absorb this kind of energy in a séance room instead of giving it out. If you find somebody who seems positively to thrive on séances, be wary. That person is almost certainly—perhaps quite unconsciously to himself—helping himself at the expense of others. There is more in the vampire theory than most people suppose. A séance chamber for physical phenomena is a kind of melting pot of nervous energies. The vampire takes back an undue share of what is left over when phenomena are concluded and he may also be drawing on his own account from his neighbours during the whole time of the sitting. And it is not always necessary that such a person be in a séance room in order to receive benefit at the expense of his fellows. A hall full of people or a

crowded public conveyance suffices. I also am inclined to think, from the circumstantial tales that have been told me, that there are means of starting up an actual flow of nervous elements from one person to another, the victim at the time being quite unconscious of the use that is being made of him. For it is a peculiarity of the loss of energy of the nervous type—the kind of loss that occurs at séances—that the depletion is not usually felt at the time of its occurrence, but only some hours afterwards. After an evening sitting for physical phenomena, it is often only on the following morning when the ill effects are observed. So unequal have I found to be the contributions of nervous energy from different people, that when acting as a member of a circle I now always, if I can manage it, ask all the individuals present to join hands for a moment at the conclusion of the sitting—at the same time asking the operators to average up, as far as they can, the total loss amongst those present. So in order to safeguard your health you should be careful with whom you are sitting.

The following are some further results of weighings just before and just after séances.

Results for an ordinary séance where the sitters' hands were in contact with the table throughout.

A drawing-board was placed upon the platform of the weighing machine and a chair upon the drawing-board. The board and chair together weighed $18\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. and this is included in the weights given below.

	Weights just before séance.		Weights just after séance.	
	Stone	Pounds	Stone	Pounds
Mr. X. (medium).....	11	$9\frac{3}{4}$	11	$9\frac{1}{4}$
Miss A.	8	13	8	$12\frac{1}{2}$
Mrs. B.	10	$2\frac{1}{2}$	10	2
Mrs. C.	11	$11\frac{3}{4}$	11	$10\frac{3}{4}$

The following are the results for the same sitters but for another contact séance.

	Weights just before séance.		Weights just after séance.	
	Stone	Pounds	Stone	Pounds
Mr. X. (medium).....	11	$10\frac{1}{2}$	11	$10\frac{1}{8}$
Miss A.	9	0	8	$13\frac{1}{4}$
Mrs. B.	10	$1\frac{3}{4}$	10	$1\frac{5}{8}$
Mrs. C.	11	$10\frac{1}{4}$	11	$10\frac{1}{8}$

PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM 55

The following are the results for a "direct voice" séance. The drawing-board and chair in this case together weighed $13\frac{3}{8}$ lbs., and this is included in the weights given below.

	Weights just before séance.		Weights just after séance.	
	Stone	Pounds	Stone	Pounds
Mrs. Y. (medium).....	19	$13\frac{3}{4}$	19	$13\frac{1}{2}$
Mrs. B.	9	$13\frac{1}{2}$	9	$13\frac{1}{2}$
Mrs. C.	11	6	11	$5\frac{1}{4}$
Mrs. D.	10	$3\frac{1}{2}$	10	3
Mr. X.	11	$6\frac{1}{4}$	11	$4\frac{1}{4}$
Mr. E.	13	7	13	$6\frac{1}{2}$
Mr. F.	12	$9\frac{1}{2}$	12	$9\frac{1}{2}$

A very simple method of communication between this state and the next is by movements of a table when a number of people sit round it and place their hands on it. Its chief recommendation is that it does not require a very powerful medium. The experimenter will find that nearly any combination of half a dozen persons can obtain movements of the table in this way. Unfortunately, however, there are several drawbacks. For, generally speaking, communications thus obtained are not clear and definite. We have, to begin with, contact between the hands of the sitters and the table, so

that the questions of involuntary muscular movement and the influence of the muscles on the thoughts of the sitters come in, which are very serious matters indeed when the veracity or falseness of messages has to be considered.

I have made some experiments on movements of the table with contact and have otherwise observed many cases of the phenomenon with various mediums. I have come to the conclusion that there are three methods by which the table is caused to move:—

(1) All movements are due to muscular force employed by the medium. The medium may be quite unconscious that he is exerting muscular pressure, but the fact remains that every motion of the table is due to him. (I do not say that it is not a genuine psychic action, for in many cases I believe it is.) And not only is he employing muscular pressure, but he is using a force above that which he normally exerts—a well-known condition accompanying psychic action, which often causes an enhancement of muscular tension.

(2) All movements are due to psychic action—to psychic forces applied to the table quite

independently of the muscular system of the medium.

(3) Movements are caused by a mixture of (1) and (2); i.e., there is true psychic pressure combined with some muscular pressure.

It is only with mediums of the type (2) one can be fairly certain that true psychic messages are coming through.

The chief trouble with these contact movements is the determination of the effect of the thoughts of the sitters upon the motion, either ordinary objective thoughts or subconscious ones. How far can we be sure that the movements are due to external agencies and how far to ourselves? For my part I do not think that any strict line of demarcation can be drawn. I have often found that messages thus delivered are a mixture of the real thing and the false and that absolute reliance cannot be placed upon them. Nearly everybody who has experimented is aware of the sometimes unsatisfactory character of such messages. A name, for instance, is being laboriously spelt out and the spelling breaks down in the middle so that the word cannot be completed, and if attempts are

made to complete it, only worse confusion ensues; some simple sentence becomes inextricably mixed up with another; two entities seemingly try to communicate at the same time; and so on. I have known many cases in which the answers received have been obviously due to the thoughts of the sitters, either subliminal or objective, and to nothing else whatever. It was perfectly apparent that no spirit entity had anything to do with them. On the other hand I know of some cases where brief but genuine messages have been received—proved genuine by corroborative phenomena at the same or a subsequent séance. A favourite explanation for the confusion and uncertainty arising from these “contact” messages among spiritualists is that two or more spirits in different “planes” are trying to operate the table at the same time, existing on different planes they cannot see each other and are otherwise totally unaware of each other’s presence. This is a plausible enough explanation but is suspect. More likely the cause lies in the imperfect means of communication, the lack of a strong medium, and in the physical contact between

hands of sitters (and hence their brains) and the table. It is my experience that whenever opportunities are given, the inhabitants of the next state endeavour to open up communication with this; so one can be pretty sure that when any circle of earnest enquirers sits round a table and gives as good conditions as possible, everything will be done that can be done from the other side. There is no need to put down any confused messages to lack of will to communicate on the part of our friends across the barrier. Their world is not a world of chaos but one of orderly and systematic endeavour. They do all the real work at séances and it is to be presumed they labour in a consistent and regulated manner.

Sometimes, however, the experimenter will find that he is able to obtain what look like genuine messages by means of a tilting table; and he will find that if he is enthusiastic and tries to give the best possible conditions which experience shows him are necessary for phenomena, that the clarity and length of the messages are likely to improve. For it is only by persistence that anything worth having can be

obtained in the psychic world. The *dilettante* gets nothing. Many people seem to forget that the entities operating from the next state have themselves to experiment with every circle which is formed before even the slightest phenomenon can be produced, and that sometimes the sitters do not form an ideal combination from this point of view, with the consequence that their psychic emanations have to be mixed and worked up for quite a long time before decent results can ensue. So that it is only to the earnest enquirer that phenomena come. In my opinion the home circle is the place at which one should attempt to communicate with one's nearest and dearest. A good home circle meeting for an hour or an hour and a half once a week and composed only of the members of one's own family or of close friends, is in the end productive of more satisfactory *personal* results than an eternal hunt after advanced professional psychics. Certainly everyone should take opportunities for witnessing advanced phases of phenomena, but no reliance should be placed on such occasional exhibitions for anything in the way of personal communion

with particular persons in the Beyond. Materialisation, direct voice, etc., are very useful in bringing home to one's mind the reality of the next life, but the harmonious home circle with its table tilting, bits of clairvoyance, clair-audience, and so on, and minus the professional medium, is *the* best means of getting into touch, even though it may be only in a fitful way, with one's own relatives.

Returning for a little to movements of the table under contact. I remember it was through this simple means I was led to take an interest in the subject (as I daresay it is with many people). A number of us had been sitting round a small table in the usual way and had obtained the usual tiltings and usual mixed-up messages, when suddenly the table twisted round under our hands and did not stop until it had turned through nearly a complete revolution. It did this two or three times. The movement, which was so obviously not produced by any of us present and which we did not expect—this simple little turning movement—caused the first glimmer of doubt in my mind that all the table tiltings, etc., were due to sub-

conscious action of the sitters, as I had strongly held up to that time. From that moment—now years ago—I decided to investigate the matter thoroughly. When one looks back it seems rather amusing to observe from what small things one's convictions spring.

Now, while I have been careful to state that in the majority of cases of movement of a table under contact that the results are to a large extent uncertain, and that great common-sense and discrimination should be used by enquirers, yet it would not be fair to inexperienced readers if I did not say that sometimes, if one of the circle has mediumistic tendencies somewhat in excess of the average, very good results can be obtained. It is found that in many families one or more of its members possesses somewhat pronounced physical mediumship; not sufficiently strong to bring about movements *without* contact, but much stronger than is usual and such that when he or she places hands on the table along with the hands of the members of the circle, very powerful and even violent movements of the table take place; the action in these cases being often purely psychic

and having practically nothing to do with the exertion of muscular force. I am personally acquainted with the members of several such circles. At a séance with one of these, all hands being placed lightly on top of the table, the table, which weighed at least twenty pounds, rose completely into the air—this being the only case of *levitation with contact* that I have witnessed, although the phenomenon is said to be fairly common. At another of these circles some vigorous entity seemingly took charge of the table (he gave a name and other particulars) for with only a few hands lightly resting on its surface I was unable, although I exerted all my force standing directly over it, to prevent it moving, twisting about, and dancing on the floor. Yet these two friends of mine, to whose mediumship the phenomena were due, were not sufficiently strong, psychically speaking, to obtain phenomena *without* contact. They were *contact* mediums only. I rather think that in true psychic phenomena with contact, i. e., where the muscles of the medium are not used to produce the table movements, the spirit entities first of all “draw” from the sit-

ters a quantity of psychic fluid and probably connect this to the fluid emanations of the medium, i. e., attach it to his aura so as to strengthen it. They then apply forces to different parts of the table as they do in non-contact phenomena by means of rod-like projections from the auric sheath of the medium. The reaction would thus probably be found on the medium as it is in the case of non-contact phenomena. Any reader of these notes who has attended a few circles will be aware of the cold breeze which is often felt on the hands for a little time at the commencement of the sitting; and perhaps, also, of a peculiar kind of tingling of the finger tips and even of a cobwebby sensation on the face and hands; also, sometimes a feeling of nervous irritation as though something was being *drawn* out of the body. These things usually happen only at the beginning of the séance and are in abeyance later on. What they really mean is probably that the operators are abstracting from the bodies of the sitters particles of nervous matter; are causing a flow, as it were, from their bodies. Normally, I expect that the aura, the nervous enswathement of the

body, is in a state of equilibrium, but that the operators can act on it and project it to a considerable distance from the body. When the hands of the sitters are in contact with the wood of the table, the spirit operators, acting as they must from within the body outwards, can project these auric or nervous emanations into space more easily than if there was an air gap to cross, as in non-contact phenomena. The emanation when projected, clings to the wood, and does not tend to dissipate itself in the air. It can therefore be more easily collected and concentrated in the immediate neighbourhood of the table than would be the case if it were thrown from the body into the air with no conducting medium to help.

It is interesting to speculate about the why and wherefore of such phenomena even though there is very little to go on in the way of experimental results. I have certainly received messages *via* the table stating that the spirit entities *mix* the psychic or nervous emanations of the sitters and that sometimes there is difficulty in getting these emanations to blend, this especially being so if the circle is a promiscu-

ous one. And my observations on non-contact phenomena lead me to believe there is a certain amount of truth in the statement. For instance, in séance rooms where tables were moved without physical contact, I found that after a sitting was well started, I was always unable to charge an electroscope, even though I tried to do so in a corner of the chamber farthest from the medium. In order to charge it I had to take it outside the room. I asked the operators if there was any "power" in the séance room so far away from the medium and they answered by raps that there was. By "power" I understood them to mean particles of matter taken from the medium. They always called everything of this nature "power." I take it that some of the nervous particles from medium and sitters were probably floating about in the air—particles which had got out of control, as it were. Indeed, it is not hard to imagine this is so. For occasionally I have felt a peculiar tension of the nerves in the séance room as though external charged particles were interacting with my nervous system. I did not feel this very strongly or very often at my Bel-

fast experimental circle, owing, presumably to the nervous currents being so rigorously under control there. But with other mediums and circles I have felt it very violently. As a case in point I remember I was once sitting beside a friend at a public meeting, when he suddenly commenced to shiver and give spasmodic jerks of the body and limbs, and to present, in short, all the symptoms of being under strong "control." He tried in vain to throw the influence off but did not succeed, and had finally to leave the room. As I say, I was sitting beside him, but I was not in physical contact with him. But while the spasmodic jerking was occurring, I felt a most peculiar electrical kind of tension all over my body; not a jerky muscular feeling, but a sensation as though my nervous system was highly "charged." The feeling disappeared as soon as my friend left the hall. What had been happening? Possibly some spirit entity was endeavouring to take control of him (as a matter of fact he said he recognised his chief "guide"), was acting on my friend's nervous system, was throwing off into space surrounding him nervous streams, or nervous

particles, or was acting on or expanding his aura, with the consequence that my own nervous system or auric enswathement came into the region of disturbance and was thereby affected.

I remember that on another occasion something of a similar nature occurred. A young lady was showing me some of the phenomena she could obtain with the table. She was a powerful "contact" medium and no sooner did she place her hands on the edge of a heavy table than it moved about in an extraordinarily violent manner. I was standing near the table, a couple of feet away from the medium. Suddenly I felt a violent muscular contraction in the chest, and this was succeeded in a few seconds by another. At the same time the whole of the little room seemed to be highly charged with a species of electrical tension which impinged upon and strongly affected the whole of my own nervous system. So violent were the sensations that I had in the end to leave the room. And I experienced disagreeable twitches and a nervous exaltation round the surface of the body for more than an hour afterwards.

It seems likely that the nervous emanations projected from the medium were in this case of so violent a character that they were sent out into space for a considerable distance round her and impinged upon and affected my system of nervous equilibrium. Psychic energy must come from somewhere and there is every reason to suppose, as I have mentioned, that a lot of it comes from the bodies of the medium and sitters in the room. The field for research here is vast, and I for one, if I can find the time, intend to experiment in this domain.

Only persons who feel a strong desire that way should investigate spiritualism. It is not a matter of an evening's fun. The subject should only be approached in a reverent and enquiring spirit, all levity of a hilarious kind being strictly prohibited. For it is a sufficiently serious matter to meet together with the object of opening up communication across the bridge of death, as many of us believe is the case. We are, at the very least, delving into the unknown, and it behooves us to protect ourselves by behaving in a serious and becoming way. I know enough from practical acquaint-

ance with the subject to say that it is only by looking upon the matter in a serious light that any results of value can be obtained. I do not mean, of course, that when we assemble for a séance we should be pervaded with a gloomy and solemn spirit. That is quite unnecessary and deleterious to good phenomena. But there should be no behaviour of a childish or silly kind.

During sittings the mind should be kept in a state of gentle relaxation—there should be no mental concentration. Too much attention should not be paid to any phenomena occurring, the reason being that when the brain is in a state of concentration experiments show that operators—those who produce the phenomena—have difficulty in establishing the essential flow of psychic energy from the bodies of the sitters. Why this should be so I do not pretend to know, but that it is so I have no doubt whatever. No troubles or worries of any kind should be brought to the séance room. The mind should be in a placid cheerful state. The better the physical health, the more cheerful

and happy the spirit, the better the phenomena, other things being equal.

No heavy meals should be partaken of for some hours before a séance. The members constituting the circle should assemble half an hour or so before the sitting and listen to a little good music, played perhaps by one of them on the piano or organ. This aids mental harmony and gives the right atmosphere for the séance to follow. It had also another object in that—as I believe—it enables the spirit operators to establish preliminary contact with the members of the circle.

I am going now to describe, in some detail, the method used in holding an ordinary “contact” séance, i. e., a séance in which the members of the circle place their hands on the surface of the table. This, as I have already said, is a very elementary method of holding communication with unseen intelligences; but, unfortunately, it is the only one possible or probable for the great majority of investigators.

Under good conditions, however, it is a fairly satisfactory method and may possibly lead to higher and more advanced phases of phenom-

ena. In any case the hints that I am enabled to give are all from practical experience, and will, most of them, apply to all sorts of physical phenomena. There is a line of continuity about these things, from elementary to most advanced, which is more real than apparent.

Of course the experimenter must rely for evidence only on the messages he receives through the tilting table. If he goes about the matter in the proper way he may be surprised at what will come to him through this simple means. I say nothing of that here. It is my function to show the thing is done—to explain the mechanism as far as possible—and to let him cogitate over and analyse the results.

Let me summarise. If five or six people sit round a small ordinary wooden table and place their hands palm downwards lightly on its surface, the table may sooner or later rock about or tilt up and down. This movement of the table may conceivably be accomplished in one of three ways:—

(1) The table may be consciously moved by muscular pressure from the sitters.

(2) The table may be unconsciously moved by muscular pressure from the sitters.

(3) The table may be moved without the aid of muscular action at all.

It is only of the last type of movement I wish to speak, for it is a true psychic action which may not only cause the table to rock up and down, but may even make it rotate under the hands of the sitters, may cause it to dance about the floor of the room, and even in extreme cases levitate—i. e., rise bodily off the floor. The sitters, it is understood, are only touching the top of the table lightly with the palms of their hands or with their finger tips. When the table thus moves about by the true action of psychic force upon it, it seems to possess a peculiar attribute of inherent liveliness and lightness, very obvious to the sitters, who soon become convinced that its motions are quite independent of muscular pressure. On the other hand, if the psychic force is absent or is not being applied, the table feels heavy and dead.

What causes the table to move if muscular force has nothing to do with the matter? Up to the time of my experiments on table move-

ments without contact, I do not think anyone had much idea. But I fancy the matter is a little clearer now. Arguing on the basis of non-contact phenomena what probably happens is that psychic arms—invisible and impalpable—project themselves from the person who is mediumistic, these arms being supplied with energy from the bodies of the sitters. Briefly, the medium supplies the psychic arm and the sitters the energy required to work it. If there be no medium present no psychic arm can be projected and no phenomena can ensue though all the sitters may be able to give forth psychic energy in abundance. Hence it does not follow that because a person is robust in health that he must of necessity be a good physical medium.

These invisible psychic arms probably grip the table by adhesion to its under surface or legs and thus bring about the movements which appear so mysterious. I must refer the reader who is interested in this phase of the subject to my book "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena,"* where full experimental details are

* Published 1918, by E. P. Dutton & Company, New York.

given of tests made with phenomena of the non-contact type.

Why is it so much easier for the unseen entities to move the table, i. e., to apply psychic force to it, when the hands of the sitters are in gentle contact with it than when no one is touching it? Possibly and probably because they find it a great deal easier to abstract psychic energy from the sitters and store it within the fibres of the wood of the table when the sitters' hands are in contact with the wood than when there is no contact. For I have reason to believe that the energy required to bring about the movements—i. e., to account for the work done, is really stored within the wood of the table and used as occasion demands.

What are the best conditions for obtaining good psychic movements of the table? The first essential, of course, is the presence of a physical medium. In many families, as I have already said, there are one or more members who are sufficiently mediumistic to allow of the display of "contact" phenomena.

A circle of sitters is necessary to support the medium, i. e., to give off psychic energy so that

the psychic arms may be enabled to move the table about. The number of persons composing the circle should, in general, be about five and should not exceed seven, at any rate in the home circle.

The sitters should sit on wooden chairs—never on cushions if it can be avoided. They should make themselves quite comfortable. They should place their hands lightly on the surface of the table, palms downwards, the little finger of each hand touching the little finger of the hand of the sitter on the other side, but their own hands not in contact. The reason for this last is that the psychic fluid—probably a very attenuated form of matter with which is associated psychic energy—is caused to circulate through the bodies of the sitters, gaining strength from each, and if a person's own hands are in contact there is, to use an electrical analogy, the likelihood of a short circuit, with the consequences that his share of the energy cannot be taken. For a similar reason the legs must not be crossed but must be planted firmly on the floor. After the séance has been in operation for some time, say for

half an hour, these precautions may be sensibly relaxed without injury to phenomena, as by that time a large store of psychic energy has probably been accumulated. If a cold breeze is felt playing about the hands it may be taken as a certain sign that psychic action is under way. The fingers of some of the circle may also become cold and some may experience a cobwebby sensation about the face, which are also signs of psychic action. After a while the cold breeze usually ceases and the fingers become warm, probably due to the fact that the withdrawal of psychic energy has ceased or is complete.

The disposition of the sitters round the table is important. Generally speaking the two sexes should alternate although the rule is not without exception. Anyhow at a first sitting let the men and women sit alternately. If phenomena are not obtained try various alterations. Even if phenomena are obtained take the advice of the operating entities as to the permanent disposition of the sitters. The reason why some arrangements of the sitters are good and some bad has probably to do with the ability of the

various members of the circle to supply psychic energy. To take a mechanical analogy, the sitters may be likened to a lot of steam engines of different types and sizes. Some are able to produce more work than others. In arranging such a series of engines so that they would all work together and give the maximum combined amount of work, we should have to be careful we did not set any one of them to work against another and cause neutralisation of effort; and further, it would be better to arrange them in a series of gradation as regards size, so that a small one was not working beside a large one and so on. The reader will thus see the underlying idea in having the proper arrangement of sitters.

The type of table used in these experiments is of some importance if good results are hoped for. To begin with, it should be made of wood, and a wood of not too great density. Ordinary deal is, I think, the most suitable. The wood must not be painted or stained or touched in any way, the reason for this being that experimental work shows that the psychic arms—those usually invisible and impalpable struc-

tures which grip the table and move it about (at any rate in non-contact phenomena) are able to act best on the plain wood. The rougher the surfaces, within limits, the better. Polished bodies, whether of metal or of wood, are disliked by these arms as they cannot get a grip on such surfaces. In fact, during experimental investigation, I have always to place a rough piece of cloth over any surface which is polished and upon which I wish psychic force to be exerted. An open porous wood is also best for the reason that the psychic energy—which, as I have already said, seems to be associated with matter in one of its finest forms—appears to be required to be stored up in the wood, and if the latter is too dense and hard, these particles of matter cannot effect a satisfactory lodgment.

I do not recommend that the surface of the table be made round. I think an ordinary rectangular one is best with its corners left quite square. In fact, as a general rule, it may be stated that there should be nothing at all rounded or curved about the séance table. The legs should be square. No edges should be

bevelled. The reason for all this is that experiment shows that the free end of the psychic arm grips by adhesion, and that, like the human hand, it can get the best grip on a corner or edged surface.

The weight of the table should, generally speaking, not exceed ten or twelve pounds. For we have to remember that the heavier the table the more work is done in moving it; and, as the bodies of the sitters in all probability supply this energy, it follows that the less energy required the less the drain on the members composing the circle. If possible the table should be constructed without nails, screws, or metal clamps of any kind; but if it is necessary to use any nails or screws they should be well bedded into the wood and their heads covered with putty. The dimensions of the table should be about thirty inches by twenty inches on top, its height about twenty-seven inches, it should have four legs and cross-bars joining the legs near the bottom. It should also have, if possible, a flat piece of wood about a foot above the floor fitted in between the legs. The table should be pretty firmly and strongly made, as some-

times the movements due to psychic action become fairly violent—especially towards the end of the séance—and it is likely to come in for hard usage.

If the experimenter does not wish to go to the trouble of getting a table as outlined above, a little bamboo one weighing four or five pounds, such as is used for holding ornaments, will be found quite useful, especially if there are only two or three sitters. But I recommend all who are in earnest about the matter to have a proper table made, which should be used for no other purpose than for séances.

The séance room should be in a quiet part of the house and as far removed as possible from street noises and the like. It should not be too large. It should be well ventilated, and, if the higher phenomena are desired, the ventilation system must not allow of external light entering the chamber. The temperature of the room is also an important factor if we desire good phenomena. About 65° Fahrenheit seems to be the best. Apart from inconvenience to the sitters caused by temperatures much higher or lower than this, the psychic emanations from

the bodies of the medium and sitters are also probably to some extent adversely affected—it being probably a question of chemistry. Experimenters have found that a wet or moist condition of the atmosphere is deleterious to phenomena, the dry, electrical condition being most advantageous. Perhaps the presence of an undue quantity of water vapour in the air causes reaction upon the psychic stuff present in the chamber, the action again being a chemical one.

The question of lighting the séance room is an important one. Indeed, I may say that the light question has been the most troublesome one throughout the whole history of psychic research. The plain fact of the matter is that anything like advanced phenomena cannot be obtained in any but the feeblest of light. Of course there are very good reasons for this state of things, but nevertheless it is very annoying. Perhaps, generally speaking, the fact that nothing of any magnitude can be obtained in ordinary light is a provision of nature, for otherwise, I suspect this world of ours would be continually under impact from the realms

psychic. The chief specific reason for the necessity of absence of light seems to lie in the fact that ether light vibrations prevent the efflux of psychic energy from the bodies of the sitters, or else inhibit the invisible emanations from the body of the medium; that is to say, the ether ripples interact on psychic stuff generally and break it down.

For advanced phenomena I have only been able to use a red light, i. e., the kind of light in which the ether vibrations are slowest. However, for contact phenomena such as I have been considering, we need not, fortunately, be so rigorous. If the séance is held at night it is generally sufficient to pull down the blinds and put a screen in front of the fire, the gas or other lights being lowered. Have no illumination, or very little, on the top or under surface of the table. If the experimenter desires to have the best results and does not mind going to some trouble, he should instal a system of red illumination. If gas is the illuminant, it is easy to fix it inside a lantern having red glass front and sides. If electricity is available, red glass globes can be used, and

if fine gradation is essential, a resistance may be placed in the circuit so that the intensity of illumination may be increased or decreased at will. For the higher phenomena, such as movements without contact, a proper lighting system is essential, and this means also a special room kept for nothing but séances. Also in this case a proper method of heating the room is required, no open fires being possible. Various gas and electric stoves can be obtained which give out heat but no light, and one of these should be installed, or a little ingenuity in the use of asbestos sheet can prevent light rays from being projected into the room if an ordinary heating stove is used (of course an ordinary gas burner or electric light should also be in the room so that the chamber may be normally lighted except during the time of the actual séance). But these precautions are only necessary for the major phenomena and are not needed for motion of a table with contact.

Many mediums can obtain with contact good psychic movements of the table in fairly strong daylight, and most can obtain them in a light comparable to the dusk of evening. Let each

experimenter try for himself and discover the maximum of light possible consistent with good results.

The inhibiting properties of actinic light are sometimes useful. For occasionally towards the end of a séance the table movements become very strong—stronger, in fact, than is agreeable if the mediumship is a little above the average—and if that is so these motions may be immediately stopped by shining a strong light on and around about the table top, i.e., the gas need only be turned on full.

At the conclusion of the séance the members composing the circle should clasp hands in chain order for about a minute, a request being made at the same time to the entities controlling the circle that the loss of psychic energy due to the phenomena should be averaged up amongst the sitters. I have found that this method really has some value and prevents undue depletion from anyone from whom the psychic flow can be easily started.

I am going now to describe some experimental work which can be done on contact phenomena. The apparatus is comparatively sim-

ple and may be constructed by anyone possessing a little ingenuity. I am aware that many investigators of this subject would like to test the matter in a more rigorous manner than is possible in the ordinary way.

Figure 1 shows the type of table I have employed at many of my experimental séances. Its construction will be readily understood from the photograph, although the reader will note that there is no underleaf such as I have recommended previously, the reason for this being that with experimental work it is advisable to have the legs clear of all encumbrances.

Figure 2 shows the underside of the table and the construction adopted in order to use as few nails as possible.

Figures 3 and 4 show the table fitted up for experimental work.

Briefly the object of the apparatus on the top of the table is to prevent muscular pressure, or at least to render the fact of muscular pressure immediately known.

Figure 5 is a plan of the top of the table. A rectangular piece of wood (E) is screwed to the centre of the table; four thin flat pieces



FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4

of wood A, B, C, and D are hinged to E, so that they can move freely up and down. Underneath each of these flat pieces of wood a small piece of helical spring is fixed to the surface of the table, and each of the flat pieces rests

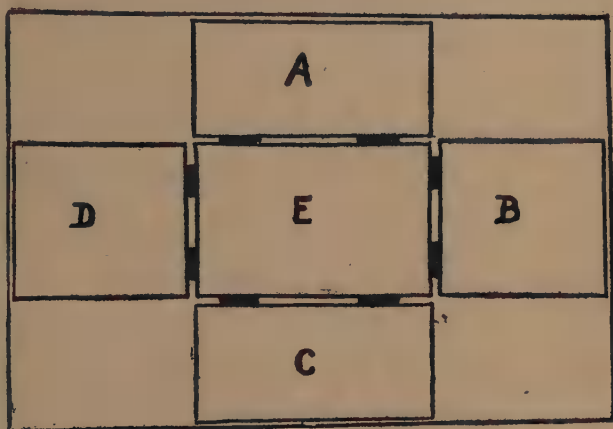


FIG. 5

on the top of the spring. Upon the surface of the table and upon the lower surfaces of A, B, C, and D, metal contacts are fixed, which are connected together by insulated copper wire and put in the circuit of an electric ball which is fixed upon the wall. Across the centre of A, B, C, and D a chalk line is drawn. The pressure necessary upon A, B, C, or D to cause

the contacts to meet and the bell to ring can be ascertained by placing weights upon them. The sitters must be instructed not to place their fingers beyond the chalk lines. A good way to adjust the apparatus is to place a small weight anywhere on A, B, C, or D, outside the chalk line, and thus cause the bell to ring. A very little manipulation will soon enable the experimenter to so arrange matters that the bell will ring for any pressure exceeding, say, half a pound.

The table is suspended by four cords as shown in figures 3 and 4 and is hung from a circular spring balance which is fixed to the roof. The legs should clear the floor by a distance of 3 inches or 4 inches. The four sitters forming the circle should then sit upon wooden chairs and place their fingers lightly beyond the chalk lines upon A, B, C, and D, respectively. The experimenter should satisfy himself that the bell will ring for any combined pressure greater than, say, a couple of pounds. The séance should then be allowed to proceed in the usual way. If the mediumship be fairly strong it will be found that the table will soon begin

to oscillate about and jump and down. A request should then be made to the operators that a downward force be put upon the table without causing the bell to ring. This may not be very successful at first, but sooner or later it will be found that the spring balance will indicate a considerable downward pull—much in excess of that possible by muscular pressure from the sitters without causing the bell to ring. Also a request may be made that the table be pulled or pushed upwards without the bell ringing, and this will probably be also found possible.

The following are some of the results that I have obtained with apparatus such as described. With the hands of the sitters lightly touching the top of the contact apparatus I have had the table pulled downwards with the force of $27\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. in excess of the weight of the table, and I have had it pushed or pulled upwards with a force of 12 or 14 lbs., that is to say, with a force practically equal to its weight. Not once, but dozens of times have I had such results as these, which show beyond the possibility of doubt that the pressure applied to the table was

not a muscular one but was due to pure psychic action. The reader, if he goes along such lines, will probably be able to satisfy himself in the same way. If he wish to proceed further he may place a small platform weighing machine on the floor beside the table, and he may seat the medium on a chair placed upon the platform, and in this way he will be able to note the effect on the medium's weight of the various psychic pressures exerted on the table. I have a large series of such results, but I will not give them here. I would rather the reader experiment for himself and come to his own conclusions. It will be found that if the mediumship present is at all strong the contact phenomena may quickly develop into the non-contact variety, in which case the reader will understand that he may proceed to experiment along similar lines. He will probably find that the methods made use of by the operators are similar in both cases though differing somewhat in degree.

Let me now proceed to state some of the conditions and precautions that must be observed if good *non-contact* phenomena are expected.

In the first place it is useless to expect much in the way of this kind of phenomena unless the experimenter is prepared to go to considerable trouble. The lighting will have to be attended to carefully, for probably nothing will be obtained if any daylight enters the séance chamber. An artificial light will have to be resorted to, and the only kind of light possible, as I have already explained, is a red one. The sitters will have to attend regularly, once a week probably for months on end. They should keep to a definite hour for each sitting, and nothing, except the impossible, should prevent the séance being duly held at that particular hour. The table should be placed within the centre of the circle, but the sitters, instead of placing their hands upon its surface, should clasp each other's hands in chain order. Figure 1 shows a correct method of holding the medium's hands, where it will be seen that the fingers are comparatively free—the reason for this being that experiments show that the psychic fluid issues most easily from the extremities, either hands or feet. It is not necessary that the medium should go into trance for non-contact phenom-

ena; indeed she may be as wide awake as any of the members of the circle, even while phenomena of tremendous magnitude are occurring. At the same time if the medium evinces any desire to go into trance nothing should be done to prevent her, for she will be quite safe if the circle is being conducted on satisfactory lines. It is possible that for several months no phenomena at all will be obtained, while on the other hand phenomena may occur within five minutes of the red light being turned on. The kinds of phenomena to be expected are raps, movements, and levitation of the table. If raps occur it will be very soon found that there is some conscious intelligence behind them. A code should then be arranged with this intelligence, say three raps for "yes," one for "no" and two for "doubtful." Messages may also be arranged for, by a rap being given for any particular letter of the alphabet as it is spelt out. Above all I would impress upon the reader the fact that non-contact phenomena are of a somewhat advanced type, and that if he expects to get them he will have probably to go to considerable trouble, and perhaps inconve-

nience; nevertheless, I am sure that this type of phenomena is not at all beyond the mediumship of a great many persons, and I expect to see it develop greatly in the future.

It has been found from experience that the effect of music at séances is to heighten and make easier the phenomenal effects obtained. Good harmonious singing has certainly a beneficial effect. Organ music greatly assists things at materialisation sittings, and during séances for all kinds of phenomena a little singing should be indulged in. How does music help? In my opinion in two ways. The first and most obvious is that it soothes the minds of those present, and experience proves that for the best results an equable condition of mind is essential. Any anxiety, worry, or mental disturbance brought into the séance room is very deleterious to the production of good phenomena. A light-hearted, hopeful, buoyant spirit is by far the best. The operating entities find a heavy, melancholy condition of mind almost impossible to work with, for the reader should

remember there is much reason to suppose that even for physical phenomena the brains of the sitters are impressed; I mean that the flow of nervous energy is probably started, or at any rate partly started, by impression on portions of the brain. Hence the beneficial effect of good music upon the spirits of the sitters is a direct aid to the production of phenomena. But music, for physical phenomena, at least, has a second and perhaps more important function. This seems to be nothing less than to set the air into a state of rhythmic stress. It is well known that sound is transmitted by waves in the air, alternate rarefactions and compressions. It would appear that when the flabbiness, as it were, has been taken out of the air by setting it into an initial state of slight vibratory stress by the action of sound waves, the spirit operators can work to the best advantage. The same kind of thing is not unknown in ordinary experimental work. As a case in point I may cite an experiment often performed in mechanics laboratories, where a long cord of india-rubber has weights applied to its end in order that the elongation produced may be measured. To

take the initial looseness out of the cord, a very small weight is first hung on it and this weight is not counted in subsequent computations. That is to say, to get the best effects and to render the calculations accurate, the cord is first put into a slight state of stress. So it is, I opine, with the air in the séance room. The operators find it easier to throw out their psychic projections if the air is in a state of slight initial vibratory stress, and they find this is best brought about by music and especially by the deep notes of the organ. There is a reason, if we can only find it, for everything, and it is wise to seek the why and wherefore of things in the deep and mysterious processes connected with psychic phenomena.

Nearly all physical séances, from the most elementary to the most advanced, can be divided into two fairly well-marked stages. There is the stage of preparation or of psychic instability, and the stage of psychic equilibrium. In the former the various initiatory processes are set in operation which presently result in phenomena. The preparatory part of the séance time is required, I think, chiefly to set

processes going which result in a supply of psychic energy being obtained from the bodies of the sitters. The nervous twitching of the body often experienced at or near the commencement of séances is visible evidence of this fact. The duration of the initial stage is affected by many things, the health and harmony of the sitters, and the state of the weather being perhaps the most important. If all or most of the essential conditions are good, the preparatory stage is usually over very quickly. I have seen phenomena commence the moment the red light was turned on, and on the other hand, with the same sitters and conditions apparently the same, I have seen them delayed for half an hour; thus the importance of going to considerable trouble with details.

I have no doubt whatever that the operators—i.e., the entities producing the phenomena, whether the reader look upon such entities as spirits, our subconscious selves, or extra-terrestrial intelligences—have to do a good deal of experimenting in order to obtain satisfactory results. I have many times watched them experimenting in order to bring about some par-

ticular phenomenon they desired; they would keep trying even after repeated failures, and would not give in until success was actually attained or until they realised that what they wished was impossible of accomplishment. I do not doubt that even the simplest phenomena require quite a lot of testing and working up before a successful result is reached—for it must be remembered that these entities are not working miraculously but are making use of natural laws that we of this world know little about at present. A time is coming, of course, when we shall know quite a lot about them, but that time is not yet.

Above all, whether the experimenter accepts the spirit hypothesis or not he should remember at the very least that he is impinging upon the realm of unknown energies and intelligences and should therefore only touch the matter if he is prepared to give it proper attention. If he could have a peep behind the scenes while even such an elementary form of phenomena as table movements is taking place, he would probably be greatly surprised at what he would see. My deliberate opinion, after some years of re-

search in this field, is that it requires the co-operation and work of many unseen entities to produce physical phenomena. All the real work is done on their side of the line and all we do when we sit in the séance room is to supply suitable conditions. That is to say, the sitters are only the instruments through whom the work is done.

The reality of psychic phenomena is nowadays little disputed. In a short time such phenomena will be classified and indexed and form part of the acknowledged scientific facts of the day. It would have been so long ere this but for the intolerable amount of humbug and deliberate fraud formerly connected with the subject. One cannot even yet be too careful in treading its thorny paths. The professional medium who takes large fees must always be under the temptation to fraud if for any cause phenomena should temporarily be lacking in quantity or quality. Some there are who, to their honour be it said, do not fall; others are suspect. It may be said, speaking generally,

that the psychic who can show something in the way of physical phenomena, such as telekinesis, direct voice, materialisation, etc., is most worth while. My advice to the enquirer into things psychic is to take nothing for granted and to leave the paid mediums alone as far as possible. Depend more on the family circle or on circles made up of intimate friends. Go only to mediums who have a very clean record if you go at all. Ask help from people who from long experience in this work can really give you good advice. For the pitfalls are many and if not careful you may one fine morning find your faith in the realities of a next world shattered by the discovery that some imposition has been practised upon you. I do not wish unduly to alarm any reader who may know little of the subject. As a matter of fact I have come to the conclusion that the fraud hypothesis has been rather overdone in the past and that there is really much less imposture than is supposed. Nevertheless it is well to be on the safe side and to recognise that it exists.

I suppose few people have had the opportunity or the inclination to make such a prolonged

and almost microscopical investigation into some of the advanced phrases of spiritualistic phenomena as I have carried out; carried out with the help only of personal friends and under the most harmonious and perfect conditions; where the object of all was only to discover the truth, whatever that truth might be. Few have had the chance of examining the evidence for so long or so thoroughly; of weighing up the various inferences and little things which occur at the séances in a manner that at last brings absolute conviction to the mind. For while it is true that the major phenomena, such as prolonged levitation under experimental conditions, can be reported to the world satisfactorily; while it is true that the reaction figures can be given, the effect on the weight of the medium due to the occurrence of the phenomena, and so on, there are a hundred and one things occurring at the sittings which cannot be reduced to figures, which cannot be satisfactorily reported to the outside world, but which are nevertheless full of evidential value to the persons present. As I say, I have probed into

this matter very minutely and I am now satisfied that man survives death.

If we glance over the range of psychic phenomena—a tremendous range—we are irresistibly led to the conclusions that either (1) man survives death and the phenomena and happenings of the séance room are due to disembodied spirits, or (2) they are due to some unknown part of ourselves, some latent intelligent energy connected with ourselves which not only produces the phenomena, but acts intelligently and with consistent fraudulence, inasmuch as it pretends to be an independent spirit which has passed through physical death and now wishes to communicate to show us here on earth that death is really not the end. In short, the only alternative to the spirit hypothesis lies in the possibility of there being a chance that something may be discovered which will eventually point to some other origin of the phenomena. That is the alternative I had in mind all through my investigations. As month succeeded month, as each new phase of phenomena was presented, as each new experiment was done, I always said to myself, “Can this very determined work of

seemingly intelligent beings be but a simulation after all? Can it be all a fraud? Is it possible that nature holds intelligences belonging to ourselves or otherwise, which could so persistently deceive? What would be the object of it all? Why should our subliminal consciousness (supposing we possess such a thing) carry out for us phenomenal demonstrations on the lines of reason and intelligence, requiring effort and system, for the object of deceiving us?" No! It seems most unlikely and repellant to our sense of the fitness of things. Nobody who has not delved deeply into psychic phenomena can have any conception of its tremendous variety and range. It includes telekinetic phenomena (movement of matter without contact), apports, materialisation, the direct voice, clairvoyance, clairaudience, trance, etc., etc. There are, in fact, dozens of phases of psychic action, all consistent in the inference to which they lead, namely, that man survives death, and inconsistent on any other hypothesis. I say that the evidence is even now great, and I venture to predict that within a century all doubts will have vanished.

It is a strange fact that the most vociferous critics of psychic phenomena and of psychical things generally are those who have had the very slightest personal acquaintances with them; but this is no uncommon phenomenon. It has always been so; not perhaps in the scientific world so much as in the world of common every day affairs; yet the scientific world has not been altogether exempt, as we see to-day in the attempts of those, who from prejudice or other cause, are anxious to put a period to the researches of people wishing to advance into an unexplored domain. These critics say a thing is not, and therefore because they say so, it is not. If that does not suffice, they say it is impossible, and because they are self-appointed judges of what is possible or impossible, it is accordingly impossible. Lately, however, people have begun thinking for themselves, and accordingly the critics altered their line of attack. The psychic researchers are now easily satisfied fools. It is quite true that there may be such things as psychic phenomena, but to suppose that because a table rises and remains suspended in the air for five minutes or more with-

out anyone touching it, or because a voice issues forth from space and says it belongs to Mr. So-and-So who is not dead but on the contrary very much alive, to suppose from such phenomena that the only explanation is a spiritualistic one, is the height of absurdity. Our critics say that we have child-like, innocent minds, and that when we witness phenomena we immediately rush to the easy conclusion that they are produced by the spirits of the dead. We gulp down these conclusions as a hungry cat laps milk, and are as happy and contented afterwards. The truth is, of course, that those of us who have investigated the subject and have accordingly little time to talk about it, have done nothing of the kind. Speaking for myself, and I know it is true of my brother scientists who have entered this field, I have been more careful not to come to premature conclusions, I have brought more critical faculty to bear on the phenomena, than I have ever done in ordinary scientific work. As a matter of fact before coming to the conclusion that the phenomena I have experimentally examined were, in fact, produced by people who once ex-

isted on this earth, and who now exist in another world, I have examined every possible hypothesis so completely, I have analysed the results of the experiments so minutely, I have dug into the heart of the matter so thoroughly, that my critical faculty, and like most scientific men I possess a strong one, is quite satisfied as to the conclusion I have adopted. For me, since I *know*, it is quite immaterial if a shoal of badly-informed critics rail at the results I have arrived at after years of closest experimental study in the séance room, but it is sometimes hard on people who have not had my opportunities of research.

No man can say off-hand whether an unseen world exists or not. That such a world does not affect our senses is no argument for its non-existence. That an expert in insanity has seen no sign of it, is likewise no disproof, but rather a verification, for the next state is an eminently sane one. That certain charlatans have sometimes employed fraud in the production of spurious phenomena does not affect the matter; that Mr. So-and-So who has done no investigation says the phenomena will one day be capable of a

“natural” explanation, is immaterial. Those of us who have put time and energy into the scientific investigation of this thing have come practically to the unanimous conclusion that there is no explanation having any chance of being true, which does not presuppose the actual existence of a world outside the physical, peopled, at any rate in part, by beings who once lived upon this earth.

As a matter of fact the gullibility and simplicity of the critics of psychic phenomena are extraordinary. To take one example; they try to explain away the simple homely rap—that comparatively common and a simple method of signalling between the two worlds. But their explanations are laughable. The critics of the “rap,” one of the most elementary of all psychic phenomena, say that it is produced this way and that way in the simplest manner conceivable by nasty fraudulent methods on the part of the medium. As a matter of fact I have studied the rap rather exhaustively, placing the medium on a weighing machine, obtaining impressions of the rapping rod, and carrying out various experiments of a mechanical and elec-

trical kind, so that I know pretty well how the rap is produced, not from hearsay or imagination, but from years of practical testing in the séance room. As I have said, the ideas of the critics concerning this same rap are amusing, and of as much importance as a child's conception of the universe.

As the most voluble of the critics fails completely to understand the mechanism of the rap, a comparatively trivial phenomenon, his attempts to explain the higher phenomena, such as materialisation or the direct voice, are accordingly more laughable still. Probably no phenomena in nature have received such bizarre criticism as the psychic. Some people, it would seem, would dictate to nature as to what phenomena should be allowed and what not. They call those of us who investigate these things emotional and gullible, whereas, of course, the shoe is on the other foot, and it is they who are the lamentably emotional and gullible, inasmuch as they allow prejudice full play and at the same time place an inhibition to investigate upon the intellect.

In my opinion the greatest need to-day is the

discovery of a means of doing without the human medium in our intercourse with the next state, that is to say, the invention of a purely instrumental medium. The position, as it seems to me, is that the vast majority of people believe in the reality of psychic phenomena, but are doubtful as to the interpretation. They think that the entities behind the phenomena may prove on fuller investigation to be subconscious intelligences belonging to ourselves. They argue that the human *ego* is probably so complex in its make up, the human brain has been relatively so little explored, and the new facts of secondary and tertiary personality are so astounding, that there can be no certainty that even physical phenomena, such as materialisation, or that which I have described in my book, are produced by the spirits of the dead. They argue that there may be layers of consciousness behind our objective *egos*, which produce the phenomenal effects in a way as yet unknown, but nevertheless discoverable and have nothing at all to do with human beings in another world. The argument is of course fallacious, but it needs great experience of psychic

things to see just why it is fallacious and this experience can come to very few. If then we can procure an instrumental means of communication with the next plane of being, one of the greatest stumbling blocks to a general acceptance of the reality of the next life will immediately vanish. Can it be done?

I am inclined to think the chances are fairly even. I base my opinion on the certain fact that a line of continuity exists between the beings inhabiting the next state and this, and that those beings can act on matter in our world in peculiar and as yet little understood ways. These ways are discoverable, as I think I have shown elsewhere. I am also fairly certain that there exists a form of energy common to the two worlds. Let this once be discovered, and provided it can be obtained and used apart from the human frame, the problem is solved. I think, therefore, that the greatest need of the present day is that means should be provided to enable scientists to get on the track of this energy and sift the matter to the bottom. No amateur *dilettante* work is likely to be of the slightest use. The investigators will have to

be equipped properly in the scientific sense, and must be prepared to make the subject their life study. This will entail the provision of a considerable amount of money for the establishment of laboratories thoroughly equipped that all the apparatus which experience shows to be necessary. But the field is so promising and a successful conclusion to the search would have such a profound effect on the history of the world, that I have often marvelled the necessary funds have not been forthcoming in abundance long ago. I can think of no way in which wealthy adherents to the psychic movement could so well employ their surplus riches as in the direction I have indicated.

338954

41583

BF
1261
C88

Crawford, William Jackson, 1880-1920.

Hints and observations for those investigating the phenomena of spiritualism, by W. J. Crawford ... New York : E. P. Dutton & company [1918]

2 p. l., 110 p. plates, diagr. 19^{cm}. \$1.25

1. Spiritualism.

Library of Congress

BF1261.C88

18-228

CCSC/jc

333954

